CLAIMS

1. A computer-implemented method for hashing an image, comprising:

receiving an image; and

deriving a single hash value representative of the image such that images that are visually distinct result in hash values that are approximately independent of one another and images that are different but visually similar result in identical hash values.

2. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising storing the hash value in association with the image.

3. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising indexing the image using the hash value.

4. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising comparing the hash value with another hash value derived from another image.

5. A computer-implemented method comprising:

receiving an image;

deriving a hash value representative of the image such that images that are visually distinct result in hash values that are approximately independent of one another and images that are different but visually similar result in identical hash values; and

watermarking the digital image using, in part, the hash value to produce a watermarked image.

6. A computer-implemented hashing method, comprising:

computing a single hash value representative of a digital image such that images that are visually distinct result in hash values that are approximately independent of one another and images that are different but visually similar result in identical hash values; and

storing the hash value in relationship with the digital image.

7. A computer-implemented hashing method, comprising:

computing a hash value representative of a digital image; and

watermarking the digital image with a watermark derived, in part, using the hash value.

8. A system for processing digital images, comprising:

an image hashing unit to compute a single hash value representative of a digital image such that images that are visually distinct result in hash values that are approximately independent of one another and images that are different but visually similar result in identical hash values; and

a storage to hold the hash value.

9. A system for processing digital images as recited in claim 8, further comprising:

a watermark encoder to watermark the digital image using, in part, the hash value to produce a watermarked image.

10. A system for processing digital images as recited in claim 8, further comprising:

an image comparison module to compare the hash value representative of the image with a second hash value representative of a second image to determine whether the images are visually distinct or visually similar.

11. A system for processing digital images, comprising:

an image hashing unit to compute a hash value representative of a digital image such that images that are visually distinct result in hash values that are approximately independent of one another and images that are different but visually similar result in identical hash values; and

a watermark encoder to watermark the digital image using, in part, the hash value to produce a watermarked image.

12. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions, which when executed on a processor, direct a computer to:

compute a single hash value representative of a digital image such that images that are visually distinct result in hash values that are approximately independent of one another and images that are different but visually similar result in identical hash values; and

store the hash value in relationship with the digital image.

13. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 12, further comprising computer-executable instructions, which when executed on a processor, direct a computer to:

index the digital image using the hash value.

14. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 12, further comprising computer-executable instructions, which when executed on a processor, direct a computer to:

watermark the digital image using, in part, the hash value to produce a watermarked image.

15. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 12, further comprising computer-executable instructions, which when executed on a processor, direct a computer to:

compare the hash value with another hash value representative of another image.